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ry is, after all, in its length and breadth the history of the commonplace— aspiration and effort without corresponding achievement. So much of it is on the same level— respectable, dignified, but not commanding. And so against the forty-five miscellaneous names included above, other forty-five names and poems might be given—just as characteristic, and just as lacking in the elements of real distinction.

A SATIRE ANTHOLOGY. Collected by Carolyn Wells. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.

Carolyn Wells gives us in this another of her pleasing collections of poetry. In the introduction is offered a varying interpretation of the meaning and nature of satire which is more ingenious than classic. The author says among other things that "satire depends upon the reader. What seems satire to a pessimistic mind may seem merely good-natured chaff to an optimist." All of us who know and are fond of Carolyn Wells know her for a lovable optimist. We know, too, that she is a sincere worker; now much of her satire anthology is "good-natured chaff" without even a remote relationship to the genuine cruel satire. Shall we therefore yield her the human right to be occasionally a pessimist? Apart from the matter of a name, the collection is extremely enjoyable, and it is interesting to see a goodly number of poems of present day humorists, although the first number is Aristophanes' "Chorus of Women."

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#### BIOGRAPHY

##### THE APOTHEOSIS OF A LIVING WRITER.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON: POET, NOVELIST, CRITIC. By James Douglas. With twenty-four illustrations. New York: John Lane.

It is something unusual to tell the life of a man of letters while yet alive; and it is hardly questionable that the custom were also in this case better honored in the breach than in the observance. Not that Mr. Watts-Dunton will not ultimately deserve a biography; but it will then be, doubtless, a biography of a very different sort. Mr. Douglas is a true hero-worshipper;

and while we may not object to hero-worship in itself, we may find fault with the manner in which it is done and the extent to which it is carried.

If Mr. Douglas had only condensed — or rather, if some one else had, for obviously Mr. Douglas could not — if he had made a pointed biography of not more than two hundred pages, as in a volume of the English Men of Letters, instead of the formless bulk of nearly five hundred pages which we have; had he then enumerated his enthusiasms and summed up his conclusions — such a work (provided the subject were already passed away, and we wish Mr. Watts-Dunton no harm) were well worth while.

Instead of this what do we get? The subject of the volume is “the Master.” Every word “the Master” writes in the most trivial note must be treasured up and reproduced, when often the mere gist or content would have done. This practice wearies by its very iterative reverence.

Yet, how rich materials for an interesting biography are here! The friendship with the pre-Raphaelites; the chapters on Swinburne, William Morris, and Burne-Jones; the gypsies, both on the East Shore and in Wales; the Principles of Criticism, the splendid Essay on Poetry in the Encyclopædia Britannica, the *Athenæum* papers, the philosophy of life embodied in the novel “Aylwin,” the reverent and almost pagan-like worship of Nature, the Benignant Mother, a sheaf of Sonnets written on occasions from time to time, the life at “The Pines” with the poet Swinburne, etc., etc. Had all this been told of pleasantly, lucidly, concisely, and in good proportion, there could be no quarrel. There is plenty of good material; but, as it stands, the book is just twice too long, with its padding and ceaseless adoration. Even the nature of the illustrations enhances this fault. The prevailing air is too much that of a guide showing us through a palace or a cathedral, and we are continually called upon to sympathize with the author-guide’s Ah’s! and Oh’s! and heave many pious ejaculations of wonder. We are shown little interiors here and there — chairs and books and pictures, a cabinet, a carved mirror, or a divan. What can be in worse taste? And it almost puts us out of humor with Mr. Watts-Dunton

himself, who permits this, yet whose work we, like others, have found stimulating and helpful, and at times brilliant. Mr. Douglas evidently has no sense of humor and proportion; but has Mr. Watts-Dunton none?

AN ANCIENT AND A MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL THINKER.

SOCRATES. By Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A. *The World's Epoch-Makers*, Edited by Oliphant Smeaton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1905.

ERNEST RENAN. By William Barry, D.D. *Literary Lives*. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1905.

A work on Socrates must always of necessity emphasize his teaching, its spirit, its method, and its conclusions and results. But intimately associated with this teaching is the life of Socrates, and still more so his death. For from the point of view of the religion and law of the Athenian State, the question is obtruded upon us, Was this death that of a martyr or a criminal?

To answer this question Mr. Forbes enters into a careful and somewhat minute discussion of the civic ideals and religious demands of the Athenian Greek, and finds this best expounded in the attitude toward religion and state by the three great dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. As is known, Socrates was antagonized and ridiculed by Aristophanes, who also antagonized the last of the three dramatists, Euripides, on somewhat the same grounds of rejection of belief in the gods and hostility to the existing order of things.

What then was Socrates' relation to the philosophers who preceded him? What was his relation to the existing doctrines of the State and the common Faith? How far are the pictures by Xenophon and Plato to be accepted or to be modified? That Socrates was a reformer, and so had made enemies and would be misunderstood and would bring down upon him both the honest and the scurrilous opposition of many, is undoubted; but is it proved that he was irreligious and taught others to be so, however enquiring and analytic his mental habits? Our author thinks not, and tries to set forth his reasons with impartiality and a close study of existing conditions. "His lifelong aim was to exploit a new soul in Athens." "Character must be